

Leadership 2014 – Case Study

Electricity North West



Leadership Communications

Electricity North West has established a number of mechanisms and utilises all forms of media to enable and encourage communications throughout the organisation. A key part of our communications is messaging from the leaders in the business to employees. Various processes for these have been set up and refined and now include:

- A weekly bulletin “Connect” that is e-mailed to all employees and posted on our intranet and which includes a key from our CEO
- A monthly team briefing pack covering company, directorate and team issues
- The social media network – Yammer
- You Tube

Over the past 3 years we have ensured that in all of these communications, safety, health and environment (SHE) messages are at the forefront. Examples of this include a reference to SHE in every one of the CEO messages and a specific section on SHE at the start of every monthly briefing pack.

Leadership involvement in SHE incident management

Electricity North West has a robust procedure in place for the handling, recording and analysis of safety, health and environment incidents. In 2013-14 we re-launched our hazard and near miss reporting process to encourage the identification and resolving of hazards with the strap line of “sort it, report it”.

As well as making the reporting format much simpler and user friendly, we also ensured that the process clearly placed line managers as the first point of call for reporting of incidents to encourage their ownership of the issue. We took a decision not to set up a central incident reporting telephone number to avoid line managers being left out of the reporting loop.

As part of the investigation process we also established the “Level 1 - Local Manager” investigation which is now used for the majority of incident investigations. This has been supported since 2013 with individual coaching and training for managers undertaking investigations.

We also initiated a weekly incident review conference call for the executive leadership team and in January 2015 this was extended to the wider senior leadership team to encourage ownership and accountability for risk management among our newly appointed leadership population.

The joint Electricity North West and Trade Union health and safety committee has been long established. In 2014 however a need was identified to revitalise the committee and ensure full participation and involvement by all the recognised Trade Unions and senior management.

In 2014 we therefore revised the terms of reference for the committee and agreed the membership to include the Head of Health, Safety and Environment, General Managers, Head of HR Operations and Trade Union appointed safety representatives (up to a maximum of three representatives per Trade Union).

Following a company restructure in late 2014, the committee membership has again been revised to now include the Operations Directors, Energy Solutions Director and the Commercial Director.

In late 2014 Electricity North West restructured its senior leadership teams and a number of new leaders took up senior roles. Leadership visibility is a major part of our overall safety, health and environment management system and to ensure the new senior leaders were supported in getting out on site and discussing risk and risk controls, individual coaching and a site visit guide have been provided.

In addition, a team of senior leaders led a separate piece of work in December 2014 to provide additional guidance to their peer group on the advantages of increasing hazard spotting and risk control among their teams. With this group not being members of the SHE team the impact of this, coming from the peer group, has been significant.

Also late in 2014 Electricity North West restructured its senior leadership teams and new role profiles were developed for these important positions. To ensure the management and leadership of safety, health and environment remains an integral part of these roles, specific safety, health and environment outputs were included as mandatory and as the first priority irrespective of the role. How individual candidates would lead and manage on safety, health and environment subsequently became a key part of the recruitment and selection process for the new roles.

In addition, a leadership development programme was initiated in 2013 and continues to run across the business. The programme focuses on leadership behaviours and as part of the programme all leaders are provided with personal feedback and developmental training in personal leadership, building and motivating a high performing team, strategic influencing, engaging and inspiring, culture change and coaching. Rather than good safety, health and environment be a stand-alone leadership topic, it has been integrated into this wider leadership development programme to ensure it becomes part of the everyday values and behaviours of our leadership team.

To provide the required level of technical knowledge, all our new senior leadership team also undertook the IOSH Managing Safely qualification in autumn 2014.